

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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TAGS: ENRG, PFORN, US

SUBJECT: PRESS REACTION TO FORD AND KISSINGER SPEECHES

1. SUMMARY: ALL IMPORTANT ITALIAN PAPERS FRONT-PAGED ACCOUNTS
OF PRESIDENT FORD'S SPEECH BEFORE THE WORLD ENERGY CONFERENCE

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AND SECRETARY KISSINGER'S SPEECH TO THE UNGA. ANALYSIS DISCERNED

A NEW, AGGRESSIVE U.S. STANCE VERSUS OIL PRODUCERS, BUT FEW QUARRELED WITH PRIORITY ASSIGNED TO ENERGY CRISIS. COMMENT UNIVERSALLY CHARACTERIZED CONFRONTATION AND REPRISALS AS COUNTERPRODUCTIVE AND POSSIBLY DAMAGING TO A REAL SOLUTION BASED UPON COOPERATION AND UNDERSTANDING. ALL PAPERS CARRIED PRODUCER NATIONS' RESPONSE AND THIS SUMMARY.

2. "THE COUNTER-OFFENSIVE HAS BEGUN" LED INFLUENTIAL MILAN FINANCIAL-ECONOMIC DAILY IL SOLE/24 ORE, WHICH SUMMED UP ITALIAN PRESS ANALYSIS OF THE TWO SPEECHES OF SEPT. 23, COUPLED WITH THOSE OF PRESIDENT FORD AT THE UNGA LAST WEEK AND SECRETARY SIMON'S AT A RECENT NEW YORK BANQUET. MILAN'S PRESTIGIOUS CORRIERE DELLA SERA EMPHASIZED THE COORDINATION AND CAREFUL ORCHESTRATION OF THE U.S. MOVES, WHICH WERE FOUND TO SIGNIFY A MORE AGGRESSIVE U.S. POSITION VERSUS THE PETROLEUM PRODUCING COUNTRIES. IL SOLE/24 ORE AGREED AND ADDED THAT WHILE THE "U.S. MUST NECESSARILY TAKE THE LEAD" IN DETERMINING THE APPROACH TO THE PRODUCERS, THE U.S. POSITION SET OUT IN THE SPEECHES DRAMATIZED THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN EUROPE AND THE U.S. AND RISKED A SERIOUS DETERIORATION IN ATLANTIC RELATIONS UNLESS A WAY WAS FOUND TO COORDINATE THE TWO APPROACHES.

3. THE TONE OF PRESIDENT FORD'S SPEECH WAS CHARACTERIZED AS "APOCALYPTIC" AND "BRUTAL" BY A NUMBER OF PAPERS, BUT THAT THE PRESIDENT'S LANGUAGE REFLECTED THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE SITUATION WAS NOT SERIOUSLY QUESTIONED. ONLY COMMUNIST PARTY ORGAN L'UNITA' ACCEPTED AND REPEATED THE PRODUCER THESIS THAT OIL PRICE RISES REFLECTED PRODUCER COUNTRY NEEDS TO KEEP ABREAST OF PRICES OF GOODS FROM THE INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES. HOWEVER, ALL FEARED THAT THE STRENGTH OF THE LANGUAGE WOULD BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE; PARTICULARLY A SPEECH DESIGNED TO INITIATE COOPERATION, AS OPPOSED TO CONFRONTATION,

WITH THE PRODUCING COUNTRIES.

4. MOST PAPERS FOUND THREATS OF REPRISALS AND GAVE THEM PROMINENT PLAY. UNIVERSALLY, REPRISALS WERE CONDEMNED; SOME FOUND THEM MORALLY REPUGNANT (L'UNITA', CORRIERE DELLA SERA), OTHERS FOUND THEM AS WELL "UNREALISTIC" AND "LACKING IN CREDIBILITY" (CORRIERE DELLA SERA, IL SOLE/24 ORE, IL GIORNALE). NOTED FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMENTATOR ENZO BETTIZA WRITING IN MILAN DAILY IL GIORNALE SAID THAT REPRISALS WOULD CREATE A SITUATION WHERE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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"COUNTRIES, LIKE MIDAS, WHO TRANSFORMED EVEN FOOD INTO GOLD, (WOULD BE) SUFFOCATED BY RICHES WHILE BESET BY FAMINE". SELF-INTEREST APPEARED, MOST CLEARLY IN IL SOLE/24 ORE, WHICH NOTED THAT TIT-FOR-TAT REPRISALS WOULD "IRREMEDIABLY DAMAGE" EUROPE AND "PARALYZE" THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. IL GIORNALE EVOKED THE POSSIBILITY OF ANOTHER MID-EAST WAR; AND SUGGESTED THAT A HARD-LINE STANCE WOULD ONLY INCREASE RUSSIAN INFLUENCE OVER EVENTS.

5. THE ONLY FAESIBLE SOLUTION FORESEEN WAS THAT OF GREATER CO-
OPERATION BETWEEN OIL PRODUCERS AND OIL CONSUMERS; L'UNITA'
CALLED FOR A "CORRECT" RELATIONSHIP BASED UPON EQUALITY; CORRIERE
DELLA SERA EDITORIALIZED THAT ALL ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES (SUCH AS
U.S. PROJECT INDEPENDENCE) LACKED SHORT-TERM CREDITILITY AND CALLED
FOR A MUTUAL RECOGNITION OF PRODUCER AND CONSUMER INTER-DEPENDENCE
OR AT LEAST RECOGNITION THAT ECONOMIC COLLAPSE SERVED NO COUNTRY'S
INTERESTS. BEAUDRY

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